THE

SCRIPTURAL DOCTRINE

OF

WATER BAPTISM.

SHEWING

I. The scriptural subjects of that ordinance.

II. The scriptural mode of its administration.

AND, LASTLY,

Answering some questions for the satisfaction of serious enquirers.

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SCRIPTURAL DOCTRINE

OF

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THE great majority of those, who are denominated christians, agree, that water baptism is to be preserved as a standing ordinance in the church, until Christ shall come to judge the world in righteousness; but they are not agreed about the description of the persons, who are the proper subjects of this baptism; nor about the mode in which it shall be administered. Should a Heathen, a Jew, or a Turk, grown to the years of maturity, turn to serve the living God, and profess faith in Christ, I believe, there would be no difficulty about the propriety of receiving him into the visible church, by baptism; but if he should have an infant at the time of his baptism, or should have one in the after part of his life—the question, shall this also be baptised? would occasion a division. Some would assert, that it should—whilst others would assert that it should not. This difference of sentiment gives rise to different epithets, which serve to mark the respective doctrines. They are denominated, infant baptism, adult, or believer's baptism.

MANY pious persons have had great difficulties respecting the divine right of infant baptism. They would wish to walk in all the commandments of the Lord blameless: but they cannot see, with sufficient clearness, that he has so commanded. And, notwithstanding many learned and pious men have bestowed much labour to illustrate and prove this doctrine; yet doubts and scruples still remain. Though it ought not to be concealed, that great multitudes have expressed intire satisfaction with the arguments of these illustrious men.

OF those who doubt whether there be sufficient warrant from scripture for the practice of infant baptism, I confess myself to have been one; and I will now fairly and candidly state my doubts, and the reasons of them. I am rather induced to do this, because many persons, who, it is probable, may read these sheets, may have had the same, or similar doubts; and, because these doubts were not solved to their satisfaction, have rejected the doctrine and practice altogether. In difficult cases it affords some satisfaction to find, that others have had the same difficulties, which we our-

ſelves have had. And the more ſo, if they have got fairly through their difficulties; and we are able diſtinctly to trace the various ſteps of their progreſs.

I DO not now remember, whether my doubts aroſe exactly in the order, they are here ſtated; but as one thing muſt come before another, they ſhall be ſtated in numerical order, purely for the benefit of the reader.

1ſt. INFANTS of profeſſing parents, or of parents who had themſelves been baptiſed in infancy, were ſaid to be church members, and therefore had a right to be baptiſed.

AS I could not find infants expreſsly called church members in the New Teſtament; I concluded, if they were ſo, it muſt be by inference; I therefore examined the character of thoſe, who were confeſſed by all parties to be members of the Apoſtolic churches, to ſee whether their character would apply to infants. And, if it would apply, then they were perſons of the ſame deſcription, and ought to be called by the ſame name; and be diſtinguiſhed by the ſame privileges. The firſt members of the church profeſſed faith in Chriſt, and repentance towards God; voluntarily aſſociated themſelves for their improvement in chriſtian knowledge, and the chriſtian temper. And the more effectually to accompliſh the purpoſes of their aſſociation, were veſted with certain powers; ſuch as the choice of their paſtor, and of paſſing ſentence upon diſorderly members; but none of theſe parts of the character would apply to infants. Then to *call perſons ſo intirely different*, by the ſame name, church members—appeared to me the occaſion of great confuſion; and to found their right to baptiſm upon this ſuppoſed membership, appeared a miſtake.

2d. INFANTS were ſaid to be fœderally holy; and therefore ought to be baptiſed.

I ASKED myſelf what kind of holineſs this was? Why fœderal meant covenant; therefore it was a covenant holineſs. What purpoſes did this holineſs anſwer? Did it prepare them for obedience to the law of God? Did it prepare them for Heaven? In fine, was it that holineſs without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord? —It did not certainly anſwer any of theſe purpoſes; but it was a kind of holineſs conſiſtant with a ſtate of total and complete enmity againſt God; and of final excluſion from Heaven. To found a right to goſpel privileges upon ſuch holineſs as this, appeared to me very ſtrange indeed.

3d. I could find no direct proof from ſcripture for the doctrine—nor direct command for the practice of infant baptiſm. Theſe ſcriptures—" repent and be baptiſed every one of you, for the remiſſion of ſins—he that believeth and is baptiſed ſhall be ſaved

Go teach all nations, baptiſing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt"—did not directly convey infant baptiſm to my mind. The example of Chriſt when he ſaid, "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of ſuch is the kingdom of Heaven," appeared far from a direct proof. Had he baptiſed them, when they were brought unto him, the caſe would have been directly in point; becauſe his example would have had, with me, the force of a moſt direct precept; or had he directed any of his diſciples to baptiſe them, it would have removed all my doubts. To ſay as ſome have done—"That we may ſuppoſe he directed others to do it, though he did not do it himſelf;" has no weight with me at all; becauſe it ſuppoſes the very thing to be proved. Do not ſuppoſe that he did; but prove that he did; and the controverſy will be ended: my mind will acquieſce.

THESE words of Chriſt, "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not," did not appear ſo concluſive to me, as they have to many others; becauſe the argument drawn from them ſuppoſes, or takes for granted, a propoſition as difficult to be proven, as infant baptiſm, viz.—that baptiſm is the way to come to Chriſt. To make this a fair and concluſive argument, it would ſtand thus. Chriſt directs little children to be brought to him; but baptiſm is the way to come to Chriſt; therefore, to bring little children to Chriſt, they muſt be baptiſed. This never can be an argument to thoſe who believe that faith is the way to come to Chriſt; and that baptiſm is a ſign, that the ſubjects of it, have come to him, and now ſubject themſelves to his government; as well as a ſymbol of the efficacy of his blood to waſh away their ſins.

THE proof taken from theſe words, "For of ſuch is the kingdom of heaven" was alſo attended with ſome obſcurity. If I remember right the ſtate of the argument is this, by the kingdom of heaven in this place we are to underſtand the Goſpel Church; then it follows that Chriſt ſays, the church ſhall be made up of little children, "of ſuch is the kingdom of heaven;" but baptiſm is an ordinance by which perſons are admitted to be members of the Goſpel Church; therefore little children who are to make up the church are to be admitted by baptiſm. The obſcurity here ariſes from the uſe of the term "ſuch," becauſe it muſt, either, be a term of excluſion, or a term of ſimilitude. If it be taken as term of excluſion it proves too much, and therefore proves nothing at all—That is, if the Goſpel Church is to be made up of little children "as ſuch" all others are to be excluded; none are to be admitted if they are not ſuch, viz. little children. But the ſcripture ſaith, "he that beliveth, ſhall be ſaved," let his age and condition in life be what it will. If it is taken as a term of ſimilitude, then it only points out the temper of thoſe who are to be admitted: They

are to be humble, teachable and self-denied: not ambitious, envious, or self-willed. And this appears to be its meaning in that address of our Lord to his disciples, "except ye be converted and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

4th. I was not able to understand, what advantage could be derived to infants from baptising them. They were wholly ignorant of the nature and design of the ordinance. They were not capable of even remembring the transaction; and never would know any thing of it, unless informed by others; and if informed, seemed to be no more affected by it, than by the recital of any other thing, which had happened in their infancy. The gospel was evidently designed to direct the human mind to proper objects, and to regulate its affections; but in this case, neither of these were effected. Baptism was said to be a seal of the covenant of grace; but how it could be a seal, when the party sealing had never consented to the covenant, was to me very mysterious. That God should publish his covenant, with his seal affixed to it, and that those who consented to the terms of the covenant, and believed what God had said of his son, "That in him there was eternal life," should come and set to their seal that God was true, was easily understood, and appeared to answer a reasonable and proper end. They thereby gave glory to God, by confessing their sins, and accepting a free pardon through the merits of Jesus Christ his Son. But this was not the case with infants. After long perplexity and much doubt, I reduced the subject to this single question. Did the Apostles baptise infants? If they did there could be no doubt, but they had the authority of Christ for so doing. They acted under his immediate direction, and what they did in regulating, and establishing the churches, was done according to his will. If, therefore, I could obtain satisfactory evidence, that they practised infant baptism, I should rest satisfied, whether I knew the reason of the institution, or the ends it was to answer, or not. In the progress of my researches, I thought, I did receive very satisfactory evidence, that the Apostles did baptise infants in all the churches which they established; and that the baptism of infants was practised in the churches for ages after their deaths, without doubt, or disputation. This afforded full satisfaction to my own mind; but after some years, I was obliged to say something for the satisfaction of others; which induced me to read the best pieces upon the subject of infant baptism, which I could find; in order to furnish myself with arguments for that purpose. In the course of my reading, I found myself greatly disappointed. I could not find arguments that I could use with confidence. The conclusion, almost always, appeared so obscurely contained in the premises, that I was induced to believe, the bulk of common hearers would not be able to perceive the connection between them. And to direct them to long historical researches, would be

altogether improper; as they had not the means, if they should happen to have the time; and perhaps few of them had patience or skill for such an investigation. And to tell them, that I had made such an investigation; or that men of great learning and piety had done so, would have been leading them to rest their belief of an important gospel doctrine, and their obligation to perform an important gospel duty, upon mere human testimony,—This I could not pretend to do. I therefore laid aside all human helps, and took my bible alone, and determined if I could not support the doctrine from the scriptures, I would give it up. In searching the scriptures it appeared to me very evident, that the scriptural ground upon which water baptism, in its full extent, should be defended, was changed; and other ground taken, much less tenable. I could not find infant baptism, as such, or as a distinct doctrine, any where directly supported. All the support I could find, was by remote and sometimes obscure inference. That this may be made plain to my readers, the following example will be of use. That infant baptism is of divine institution, is the proposition distinctly to be proved. Then suppose the argument to run thus, "The Apostles were immediately commissioned by Jesus Christ himself, and taught by him distinctly what doctrines to preach, and what ordinances to establish in the churches; but the Apostles baptised the house of Lydia; the house of the Jailor and the house of Stephanas; it is probable there were infants in some, or all of these houses; as it is not easy to find three houses promiscuously taken, and without any design to make a selection, where there are not infants; we may therefore conclude that the Apostles baptised infants; and of course infant baptism is of divine authority"—This I call an indirect and doubtful argument.—An argument by obscure inference—its weight wholly rests upon a probability—it is probable there were infants in some, or all of these houses; but some have thought it as probable there were not: Then one asserts there were; and another asserts there were not; and neither of them can prove what they assert. Though they may both be strenuous, each, that his opinion is right; and each have his followers too; and yet no man upon earth can tell with certainty, which of them is right. Had the text said "And he baptised the Jailor and all his little ones straightway," it would have been a much more direct proof for infant baptism; or had it said, "He baptised him, and all his who believed, straitway," it would have been a much more direct argument against that doctrine. I cannot help being of opinion that it is a doubtful mode of either establishing, or opposing a christian doctrine, from mere probability; because I cannot admit, that any of the doctrines or duties of the gospel are left to be ascertained by conjecture; but are to be received upon the most clear and unequivocal testimony, the infalible word of God.

Had the argument been stated thus, "It is agreeable to the divine institution, to baptise a professing believer and his house;" it

would have been direct; because the Apostles who knew the mind of Christ, and were directed by his spirit did so; or again, to say that the Apostles baptised only as many of the house as believed, is changing the argument into an indirect form. I ask how it is known that they baptised none of the house but those that believed; and the answer must be, "The Apostles in other cases baptised those who professed faith in Christ, and repentance towards God; and we may suppose they baptised only such in these houses." Here the very thing to be proved is taken for granted, or supposed. That only such as professed faith in these houses were baptised. That the Apostles in other cases, and in every case, baptised those who professed faith is clear, and admits of no doubt; but that they baptised only such in these houses, admits of some doubt; and therefore should not be taken for granted, or supposed; but be directly proved. Ultimately it appeared very evident, that neither infant baptism, nor believers baptism, as they are commonly taught, and attempted to be defended, was the true scriptural baptism; and having collected what I apprehended, the bible teaches upon that subject, I felt no hesitation to deliver it to others for their information.

Several of my brethren in the ministry, as well as lay members of the church, professed themselves well satisfied, and requested, that I would print my view of the subject, for the more general benefit of the church. I have at last consented.—And I would have it remembered, that whilst I gratify my friends, I have no design to reproach, or offend any person or party whatever. I mean to use my liberty as a man, to speak what I think, and my privilege as a christian, to render a reason of the hope that is in me, that I render an acceptable service to God, when I act, in the exercise of my ministry, agreeably to the sentiments I shall here deliver. If what I shall write may contribute to set the doctrine and duty of baptism in a more satisfactory light, to enquiring and serious minds, I shall have my reward; but if it should not answer my own, or the expectation of my friends, it will only give to the world another example of the weakness and imperfection of human nature; and show how imperfectly we judge of the means of convincing others from what has been the means of convincing ourselves.

It has been a common custom with authors, when they publish a book, to give the reasons which induced them to make the publication—having complied with this custom at some length, I now proceed to my main design, which is distinctly to state, and fully to prove, what I believe the scriptures teach respecting water baptism.

I propose—1st. To shew who are the scriptural subjects of this baptism.

2dly. THE mode in which it ought to be adminiſtered. And laſtly, anſwer ſome queſtions for the ſatisfaction of ſerious enquirers.

I AM to ſhew the proper ſubjects of water baptiſm. And that the reader may more eaſily attend to the propriety, and application of the arguments, which I ſhall uſe, I will ſtate what I believe upon this part of the ſubject, "which is," That if a man who had been a heathen, ſhould profeſs faith in Chriſt and repentance towards God, it is my duty, as a goſpel miniſter to baptiſe him, and his houſe ſtraightway.

2dly. I BELIEVE that if a man, who had been baptiſed as a member of ſuch a houſe, ſhould profeſs faith in Chriſt and repentance towards God, it is my duty to baptiſe his houſe alſo. Theſe propoſitions I am to prove.

AND for this purpoſe, I ſhall review the nature and privileges of the covenant of grace. By the covenant of grace I mean, that merciful conſtitution, which God has revealed for the ſalvation of ſinners.—There are but two ways that I know of, by which man ever could obtain eternal life—the one an act of juſtice, as a reward for his obedience—the other an act of mercy, wherein God freely pardons his ſins and accepts his perſon as righteous, through the merits of Jeſus Chriſt. The firſt, which I call the conſtitution or covenant of works, is ſhut up by man's diſobedience; ſo that now, by the, deeds of the law, no fleſh can be juſtified in his ſight. The ſecond is the only way by which man, now a ſinner, can hope for eternal life. And becauſe God has ordained viſible means to call ſinners to faith and repentance; and appointed inſtruction to be given, and ordinances to be adminiſtered, and in Chriſt has given great and precious promiſes, whereby they that believe may be made partakers of the divine nature, and all this for his own name ſake, and from no meritorious cauſe in the creature, I call it a conſtitution of grace: or to uſe the common term, with which I find no fault, a *covenant* of grace. Now whatever revelations God has, at any time, been pleaſed to make, of deſigns of mercy to ſinful man, I take to be either the whole, or a part of this gracious conſtitution.

THE glorious light, which was to bring to man the knowledge of life and immortality, dawned upon Adam not long after his apoſtacy. And this light, like that of the morning, was to ſhine more and more unto the perfect day.—Thence in proceſs of time, when God intended to eſtabliſh a viſible church, and to appoint the ordinances of divine worſhip, he revealed this gracious conſtitution more fully to Abraham which we have recorded in the 12th, 17th, and 22d chapters of the book of Geneſis. It is worth while to examine this revelation with great care and attention—that the reader may, without confuſion or embarraſſment, take a diſ-

tinct view of the ſubject, I ſhall tranſcribe the whole revelation as contained in theſe chapters.

GEN. xii. 1, 2, 3. "Now the Lord had ſaid unto Abraham, get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's houſe, unto a land that I will ſhew thee, and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bleſs thee, and make thy name great, and thou ſhalt be a bleſſing. And I will bleſs them that bleſs thee, and curſe him that curſeth thee; and in thee ſhall all the families of the earth be bleſſed." Chap. xvii. 1, 15. And when Abraham was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared unto Abraham, and ſaid unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abraham fell on his face, and God talked with him, ſaying, as for me, behold my covenant is with thee, and thou ſhalt be a father of many nations. Neither ſhall thy name any more be called Abram; but thy name ſhall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and will make nations of thee; and kings ſhall come out of thee. And I will eſtabliſh my covenant between me and thee, and thy ſeed after thee in their generations, for an everlaſting covenant; *to be a God unto thee and to thy ſeed after thee.* And I will give unto thee, and to thy ſeed after thee, the land wherein thou art a ſtranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlaſting poſſeſſion, and I will be their God. And God ſaid unto Abraham, thou ſhalt keep my covenant therefore, thou and thy ſeed after thee, in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye ſhall keep between me and you, and thy ſeed after thee, every man child among you ſhall be circumciſed. And ye ſhall circumciſe the fleſh of your foreſkin; and it ſhall be the token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old, ſhall be circumciſed among you; every man child in your generations; he that is born in the houſe; or bought with money of any ſtranger, which is not of thy ſeed. He that is born in thy houſe, and he that is bought with thy money, muſt needs be circumciſed; and my covenant ſhall be in your fleſh, for an everlaſting covenant. And the uncircumciſed man child, whoſe fleſh of his foreſkin is not circumciſed; that ſoul ſhall be cut off from his people, he hath broken my covenant. Verſes 23, 26, 27. And Abraham took Iſhmael his ſon, and all that were born in his houſe, and all that were bought with his money, every male of Abraham's houſe, and circumciſed the fleſh of their foreſkin, the ſelf ſame day, as God had ſaid unto him. In the ſelf ſame day, was Abraham circumciſed and Iſhmael his ſon. And all the men of his houſe, born in the houſe and bought with money of the ſtranger, were circumciſed with him. After Abraham had obeyed the voice of the Lord, when he was commanded to offer up his ſon Iſaac, in the 22d chap. from the 15th verſe to the 19th,

it is thus written: And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time. And said, by myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son. That in blessing, I will bless thee, and in multiplying, I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies: And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."

I HAVE called this revelation, "a revelation of a gracious constitution." That is, a constitution of grace in opposition to works, and now I will prove it.

THE great and precious promises, made in this covenant to Abraham and his seed, could not be a reward for their obedience, or the works of the law. I think it a common sentiment, that a just judge will determine according to law, either in rewarding the obedient, or in punishing the guilty; but there was no law given which prescribed such rewards to any of the human race, upon the condition of their obedience. Then as these rewards were not prescribed by any law. Abraham could not claim them, as an act of justice to himself; neither could he to his remote posterity, who had neither done good nor evil. As the law limits the reward, whatever is given more, is of grace; but the promises, in this covenant to Abraham and his seed, are more than any law had prescribed; therefore they are of grace. That is they are more than God had by any law, bound himself to confer as a reward. The apostle's testimony is decisive in this case, Rom. 4. 2, 3, 4, 5, 13, 16. "For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness- Now to him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. For the promise that he should be heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. Therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace."

THEN as the promises were to Abraham, and his seed, by grace, Let us enquire whether there was any respect to a mediator in this gracious dispensation? And we have the apostles answer, Gal. 3. 16, 17. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made, he saith not unto seeds as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant which was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. Here then we have a

covenant, the promiſes of which are of grace. A covenant which propoſes juſtification by faith. A covenant confirmed of God in Chriſt to Abraham and his ſeed. It then clearly follows that the covenant revealed to Abraham was a covenant of grace. But the apoſtle puts this matter beyond all diſpute, Gal. 3. 8. "The ſcripture foreſeeing that God would juſtify the heathen through faith, preached before the *gospel* unto Abraham, ſaying in thee ſhall all nations be bleſſed.

AGAIN, In Heb. 4. 2. It is thus written "For unto us was the *Gospel* preached as well as unto them;" but the word preached did not profit them, not being "mixed with faith in them that heard it." Here it is aſſerted that the Goſpel which was preached to the Jews in the Wilderneſs required faith; and there is no difference made between that Goſpel and the Goſpel which was preached in the Apoſtles day. "For unto us was the *Goſpel* preached as well as unto them."—If the Goſpel was preached unto Abraham—If it was preached to the Jews—If it was preached in the days of the Apoſtles—Then it was that gracious conſtitution which God had revealed for the ſalvation of ſinners commonly calledthe covenant of grace.

THIS point being fully eſtabliſhed, I ſhall only add a few words to ſhew the ſincere inquirer, that the Goſpel, preached to Abraham is the very ſame Goſpel, which is preached unto us. "Now the Lord "had ſaid to Abraham, get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's houſe, and I will bleſs thee." Abraham believed God, and obeyed his commandment. "He went out not knowing whither he went." He believed, that he who had promiſed, was able alſo to perform." God had promiſed to bleſs him, and be his God; he therefore roſe up, left his native country, his kindred and his father's houſe; he committed himſelf, his family, and his future fortune, upon the bare promiſe of a faithful God. "And it was accounted unto him for righteouſneſs."—When Chriſt, in the days of his miniſtry, called Levi, he found him ſitting at the receipt of cuſtom; "And he ſaid unto him, follow me." And he left all, roſe up, and followed him. Luke 5, 27, 28. Again, when one came to him and ſaid, good maſter, what good thing ſhall I do, that I may have eternal life. After repeating to him the commandments of the ſecond table. "The young man ſaith unto him all theſe have I kept from my youth up, what lack I yet. Jeſus ſaid unto him, if thou wilt be perfect, go, and ſell that thou haſt, and give to the poor, and thou ſhalt have treaſure in Heaven; and come and follow me." Had this young man believed, that Heaven was unſpeakably more excellent than all the goods upon Earth; and believed the word of Chriſt, that he ſhould poſſeſs it in exchange for his worldly fortune; he would not have heſitated to comply with the command "Go ſell that thou haſt, and come, and follow me." But his heart cleaved to the world; he could not part with it, and caſt himſelf upon the care of a faithful redeemer. "He therefore went

away ſorrowful, for he had great poſſeſſions." But had he with Abraham and Levi believed God, forſook all, and followed wherever Chriſt had led, it would no doubt have been counted to him for righteouſneſs. And what is the call of Chriſt to Sinners every day in the Goſpel? Is it not "Forſake thy father and thy mother, thy houſe and thy lands, deny thyſelf of theſe worldly gratifications, as thy portion and greateſt good; take up thy croſs and come and follow me; and thou ſhalt be my diſciple and thou ſhalt have treaſure in Heaven."

But the ground of complaint in every age has been, that the generality, like the young man in the Goſpel, ſee ſo much good in the world and its enjoyments, and ſo little in God and Chriſt, that they cleave to the former and reject the latter. They do not believe, that God is a better and more faithful maſter than Mammon; not even when he pronounces that awfully ſolemn, but delightful meſſage, "Come out from the world, and be ye ſeparate, and I will be a father unto you; and ye ſhall be my ſons and daughters, ſaith the Lord Almighty:" and, therefore, it is, that they will not ſubject themſelves to him. But the happy few who have believed the record, which God hath given of his ſon, that in him there is eternal life; that God, in Chriſt, is a ſoul ſatisfying an everlaſting good; and that he who hath promiſed is faithful to perform, theſe have forſaken all for his name ſake, and followed wherever God in his word and providences have led.

Now it appears that the call of God to Abraham, and to ſinners in the Goſpel is the ſame—"Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred and from thy father's houſe; forſake the world and follow me"—The promiſe to encourage them is the ſame, I will bleſs you, and be your God—Their faith is the ſame—Abraham believed God and truſted his faithfulneſs—Sinners believe God in the Goſpel, and truſt his faithfulneſs—The manner of their juſtification is the ſame—Abraham was juſtified by faith—And thoſe that believe now, are juſtified by faith—The effects are the ſame, Abraham obeyed and went—Believers ariſe and follow Chriſt—therefore it follows that it is the very ſame Goſpel.

What has been ſaid not only proves the nature, but alſo the perpetuation of the Abrahamic covenant; but for the ſatisfaction of plain readers, for whoſe information I chiefly write, I ſhall juſt remark, that there were many things added, which might be called appendages for the time being; but made no part of the covenant itſelf. As for example; there was a nation to ariſe, of the poſterity of Abraham, in the line of Iſaac, the promiſed ſeed, who were to be preſerved diſtinct, and ſeparate from all the nations of the earth; and unto whom were committed the oracles of God. This nation was to juſtify the Chriſtian Church, who were to be a diſtinct body, governed by laws and maxims diſtinct from the laws and maxims of this world. There was alſo a typical land, where this

typical nation were to dwell; and a typical city, where the true worſhip of God was to be preſerved. This almoſt every Chriſtian knows; for who heſitates at this day to call the body of profeſſing believers "The Iſrael of God"—or to call Heaven *Canaan*, or the *New Jeruſalem*. It is well known that there were a great many rites and ceremonies added in the days of Moſes, which was four hundred and thirty years after the revelation of this covenant to Abraham; yet the Apoſtle tells us Gal. 3. 17. "That the covenant which was confirmed before of God in Chriſt, the law which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot diſannul, that it ſhould make the promiſe of none effect." Now if the covenant remained the ſame after, that it was before theſe were added; it will follow that it remains the ſame after they are taken away; ſo that neither the addition, nor ſubſtraction of theſe types and ſhadows made any alteration in the nature of the covenant. It was the ſame in the days of the Apoſtle that it was in the days of Abraham. It is the ſame now, that it was in the days of the Apoſtle; and it will remain the ſame to the end of time, that it is now.

HAVING taken a review of the nature and perpetuity of that covenant, which was confirmed of God in Chriſt to Abraham; we ſhall now review its diſtinct parts. And we may obſerve in the firſt place, that circumciſion was a token of that covenant, Gen. 17. 11. "And ye ſhall circumciſe the fleſh of your foreſkin, and it ſhall be the token of the covenant betwixt me and you.—There is another caſe wherein God fixes a token to his covenant; and by attending to its meaning in that caſe, we may, the more diſtinctly, aſcertain its meaning in the caſe before us. After the deluge, God eſtabliſhed his covenant with Noah and his ſeed, and ſaid "This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you, and every living creature, that is with you, for perpetual generations. I do ſet my bow in the cloud, and it ſhall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it ſhall come to paſs, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow ſhall be ſeen in the cloud. And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you, and every living creature of all fleſh. And the bow ſhall be in the cloud, and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlaſting covenant, between God and every living creature of all fleſh that is upon the earth."

IN this caſe, the bow in the cloud is a token to keep in remembrance the promiſe of God, that a flood of water ſhall no more cover the earth to deſtroy its inhabitants, and a ſtanding pledge that he is faithful, and will not fail to perform what he hath ſaid. In like manner circumciſion was a token to bring to remembrance the promiſe which God made to Abraham. "I willb e a God to you, and to your ſeed after you." And a pledge of his faithfulneſs to perform what he had ſaid. But the Apoſtle ſets its uſe in a ſtill clearer light, Rom. 4. 11. "He received the ſign of circumciſion, a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of the faith, which he had, being yet uncircumciſed. It has been proved that the covenant revealed to Abraham was the

covenant of grace; but circumciſion was a ſeal of the covenant revealed to Abraham; therefore it was a ſeal of the covenant of grace. Or take it thus: the covenant of grace holds forth a righteouſneſs, which is by faith, Rom. 3. 21. 22.—"Even the righteouſneſs of God, which is by faith of Jeſus Chriſt, unto all, and upon all that believe; circumciſion was a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith; therefore it was a ſeal of the covenant of grace.

Let us now contemplate circumciſion, in its double uſe.

1ſt. It was a ſign—What did it ſignify? By a little attention to the ſcriptures of truth, we ſhall be furniſhed with an anſwer. Deutero. 10. 6. Thus the Lord commanded the children of Iſrael by his ſervant Moſes "circumciſe therefore the foreſkin of your heart; and be no longer ſtiff-necked." And again, Deutero. 30. 6. "The Lord thy God will circumciſe thine heart, and the heart of thy ſeed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy ſoul, that thou mayeſt live." The Apoſtle ſpeaks very directly to this caſe, Rom. 2. 28. 29. "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, neither is that circumciſion, which is outward in the fleſh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumciſion is that of the heart, in the ſpirit, and not in the letter, whoſe praiſe is not of men, but of God." Here then, it ſignified a heart broken off from ſin, and joined to the Lord, in love and obedience. In fine it ſignified the renovation, or if you pleaſe, the regeneration of the heart, and is preciſely the ſame with what God promiſed to do in the new covenant, Jerem. 31, 33, "This ſhall be the covenant that I will make with the Houſe of Iſrael after thoſe days, ſaith the Lord: I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God and they ſhall be my people."

2d. It was a ſeal. Every one knows, that a ſeal, in the common intercourſe of man with man, is intended for confirmation. One man paſſes his bond to another for value received, in which he promiſes a compenſation at a future day; and in confirmation of which promiſe, he ſubſcribes his name, which is his ſign, and ſets to his ſeal. Now the man to whom the promiſe was ſealed, reſts ſatisfied that in due time the promiſe will be fulfilled. What did circumciſion as a ſeal confirm? It confirmed the promiſe of God in Chriſt to Abraham, "I will be a God to you and to your ſeed after you." Abraham believed God and could ſet to his ſeal that God was true. And God ſet his ſeal to his covenant, for the confirmation of Abraham's faith; that he would indeed be a God to him, and to his ſeed after him. Now this ſign and ſeal was applied to Abraham and his houſhold; and to be continued, in the ſucceſſive generations of his ſeed, in the line of Iſaac. We have no evidence to believe, that all Abraham's houſhold, who were circumciſed, had faith in the promiſe of God; and yet this ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith was applied to them. It may be uſeful to attend a little to the reaſon of this.—There was a propriety in the application of the ſeal, being as ex-

tenſive, as the promiſe ſealed. The promiſe was two-fold: 1ſt. "I will be a God to you," 2d. "I will be a God to your ſeed after you." Then had the promiſe only extended to Abraham, Abraham only would have been circumciſed; for that would have confirmed the promiſe to its full extent: But the promiſe alſo extended to his ſeed; it was fit therefore that the ſeal ſhould be applied to his ſeed; as a confirmation that God would really be to them, what he had promiſed. And notwithſtanding it could not be ſaid to be a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith to the individuals of Abraham's houſe, who had no faith; yet it was to Abraham to whom this gracious and extenſive promiſe was made. This reaſoning is fully confirmed by the Apoſtle, Rom. 4. 11. "He received the ſign of circumciſion, a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of the faith which he had yet being uncircumciſed; that he might be the father of all them that believe; tho' they be not circumciſed; that righteouſneſs might be imputed to them alſo." Here circumciſion was to Abraham a ſign and ſeal of the righteouſneſs of that faith, which he had; it was a ſign and ſeal that he would be the father of all that believe; and a ſign and ſeal that righteouſneſs ſhould be imputed to them alſo.

Who were intended by Abraham's ſeed or houſhold, and the meaning and extent of the promiſe, ſhall be more fully conſidered under a ſucceeding branch of the ſubject. I ſhall now proceed to obſerve; that baptiſm anſwers eſſentially the ſame purpoſes under the preſent, that circumciſion did under the former diſpenſation of the covenant of grace. All agree, ſo far as I know, that waſhing with water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, ſignifies the waſhing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghoſt—That we are dead to ſin and alive to God—That we are waſhed from our old luſts, and ſubjected to Chriſt as our Lord and maſter. And ſo the Apoſtle declares Gal. 3. 27. "As many of you as have been baptiſed into Chriſt have put on Chriſt"—Then how are we to put on Chriſt, but by believing on him for righteouſneſs, truſting in him for ſalvation, and by openly profeſſing that we renounce the world, the Devil and the fleſh, our former maſters, and take Chriſt's yoke upon us, which is eaſy, and his burden which is light. All which may be comprehended under hatred to ſin, love to God in Chriſt, and obedience to his commands. This is exactly what we have before proved that circumciſion ſignified; but circumciſion was a ſign of the covenant of grace; therefore baptiſm is a ſign of the covenant of grace too.

The Apoſtle Peter informs 1. Pet. 3. 21. "That as Noe and his family were ſaved in the Ark by water, ſo by a like figure baptiſm doth now ſave us; not the putting away the filth of the fleſh, but the anſwer of a good conſcience; that is, if conſcience gives its inward teſtimony to what baptiſm outwardly ſignifies—If it teſtifies that we have taken God for our God in Chriſt; that we have committed the keeping of our ſouls and bodies unto him, as unto a faithful Creator; then baptiſm doth ſave us." But it may be farther

aſked, how doth it ſave us? I anſwer in no other way than by its being a ſeal, and pledge of the faithfulneſs of God in the promiſe; "that they who believe ſhall be ſaved." And the manner of their ſalvation is teſtified by the reſurrection of Chriſt from the dead. That as he was raiſed from the dead by the power of God, ſo they ſhall be completely raiſed from the death of ſin, and finally from the power of death itſelf, at the reſurrection of the juſt. Then it will follow, that as circumciſion was a ſeal of God's promiſe in the covenant of grace, under the Jewiſh diſpenſation of it; ſo baptiſm is a ſeal of his promiſe, under the Chriſtian diſpenſation of the ſame covenant.

We find in that gracious revelation made to Abraham, a peculiar privilege granted unto, or honour, conferred upon him. "That he ſhould be the father of the faithful." "A father of many nations have I made thee."

I think it not improbable, that the honor of being the father of many nations, was literally conferred upon Abraham. He had ſix ſons by Keturah his ſecond wife, who might be each the founder of a nation, or tribe in the eaſt, and of Iſhmael it is ſaid, "of the ſon of the bondwoman will I make a nation; becauſe he is thy ſeed." But there appears to be a meaning in theſe words "a father of many nations have I made thee" much more important and to us much more intereſting. For it is particularly ſaid "in Iſaac ſhall thy ſeed be called." Iſaac was the ſon of promiſe; and in his line was the church to be continued, until the true Iſaac, or Chriſt the ſeed chiefly intended, ſhould come, when the church was to be enlarged, and the Gentiles taken in. For thus the Apoſtle concludes, Rom. 4. 16. "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end that the promiſe might be ſure to all the ſeed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that alſo which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all: As it is written I have made thee a father of many nations." Here then it is evident, that it was not Abraham's natural ſeed which was intended; nor was the honour confined to his promiſed ſeed in the line of Iſaac; but extended to all who were of the faith of Abraham, or to ſtate it in the words of the Apoſtle Rom. 9. 6. 7. 8. "Not as though the word of God had taken none effect. For they are not all Iſrael which are of Iſrael. Neither becauſe they are the ſeed of Abraham are they all children: but in Iſaac ſhall thy ſeed be called. That is, they which are the children of the fleſh, theſe are not the children of God: but the children of the *promiſe* are counted for the ſeed." Gal. 3. 7. Know ye "therefore that they who are of *faith*, the ſame are the children of Abraham." So then it is not the children of the fleſh in any application of the word; but the children of the promiſe who are accounted for the ſeed. Wherever believers in Chriſt are to be found, of whatever tribe or nation of men; or in whatever period of time to the end of the world, they are the children of Abraham. Gal. 3. 29. "And if ye be Chriſt's then are ye Abraham's ſeed, and heirs according to the promiſe.

LET us now enquire in what ſenſe Abraham is the father of the faithful.—I think the term father, in the ſcriptures, is differently applied—Moſt commonly it is applied to thoſe from whom we have deſcended by natural generation—Sometimes to thoſe who have had the principal part in our inſtruction and direction. Eliſha ſaid when Elijah was taken from him, "My father! My father! The chariots of Iſrael and the horſemen thereof."—At other times it is applied to thoſe, whom we imitate in our temper and practice, and whoſe will we execute—Chriſt addreſſing the Phariſees ſaith "Ye are of your father the Devil, whoſe luſts ye do." It is in the laſt named ſenſe applied to Abraham. God was pleaſed to erect the firſt viſible permanent church in the family of Abraham; he therefore conſtituted Abraham's faith as a pattern, or example to all who ſhould afterwards believe—If they imitate Abraham's faith and obedience, then are they of their father Abraham; let them be deſcended from whatſoever tribe or nation of men according to fleſh. "If ye are of faith then are ye Abraham's ſeed." As it was with that typical nation to whom the oracles of God were committed; that thoſe who deſcended in the line of promiſe were counted for the ſeed: So here the children of the promiſe only are accounted for the ſeed. Many nations are promiſed. "A father of many nations have I made thee." A very numerous offspring are to ariſe. By what mark, or criterion are theſe to be diſtinguiſhed and known? If they have Abraham's faith, and evidence it, as he did, by obedience to the commands of God—This is the criterion "by their fruits ye ſhall know them." It may be neceſſary to be a little more explicit upon this part of the ſubject—Then all thoſe who make an underſtanding profeſſion of faith in Chriſt, and repentance towards God, and bring forth fruits meet for faith and repentance; or ſuch as faith and repentance will certainly produce; theſe are to be counted Abraham's ſeed and heirs according to the promiſe—What promiſe? Why ſimply this, "I will be a God to you, and to your ſeed after you," becauſe no other promiſe made to Abraham will apply to his ſeed. —If we take the promiſe that they ſhould inherit the land of Canaan; this will not hold true, becauſe the ſeed of promiſe do not inherit that land; nor do they expect to inherit it. Nor will the promiſe that they ſhould inherit the gate of their enemies be more applicable; for the faithful have not always, nor will they always poſſeſs this promiſe. But believers of all nations and periods of time have poſſeſſed this bleſſing; that God was their God; and they were his people. The Apoſtle in writing to the church of Galatia ſets this in a clear light, Gal. 3. 13. 14. "Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us—That the bleſſing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles, through Jeſus Chriſt." What was the peculiar bleſſing of Abraham, which came on the believing Gentiles? Was it to have three hundred ſervants born in their houſe? No. Was it that their poſterity ſhould inherit the land of Canaan, and poſſeſs the gates of their enemy? No. But it was this peculiar bleſſing; that God was his God, and the God of his ſeed after him.

And this is the interpretation which the Apoſtle adds in the laſt clauſe of the 14th verſe, "that we might receive the ſpirit through faith."—The ſpirit to reprove them of ſin, of righteouſneſs and of judgment—To write God's law on their heart, and put it in their inward parts; that they might be his people, and he be their God, and the God of their ſeed after them. This is the peculiar and definite promiſe, which the Apoſtles ſeem to have had continually in their eye, and which they call by way of eminence *The Promise;* and which was to be ſure to all the ſeed. Rom. 4. 16. "Therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace, to the end *The Promise* might be ſure to all the ſeed; not to that only which is of the law; but to that alſo which is of the *Faith* of Abraham, who is the father of us all." I will only add the teſtimony of Peter to the multitude on the day of Penticoſt, Acts 2. 39. "For *the Promise* is to you, and your children, and to all that are afar off; even as many as the Lord our God ſhall call." Then this diſtinguiſhed *Promise*, is to every believing Gentile "I will be your God and the God of your ſeed after you."

The laſt enquiry, upon this part of the ſubject, ſhall be; what is the meaning of the promiſe? Will every one of the ſeed of the faithful be really converted, have the promiſe of the ſpirit through faith given unto them, and be an heir through Chriſt of eternal life? To obtain a ſatisfactory anſwer to this enquiry, we muſt review the ſtate of Abraham's ſeed, in the line of Iſaac. The promiſe ſaith, in Iſaac ſhall thy ſeed be called." And the Apoſtle, in addreſſing the Jews, as the deſcendants of Iſaac, ſaith, "The promiſe is to you, and to your children.—Now we know that all, who deſcended in that line, were not believers—How then is the faithfulneſs of God in the promiſe ſecure? The Apoſtle removes the difficulty and anſwers the queſtion, Rom. 3. 3. "For what if ſome did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the promiſe of God (which is the ſame thing with the faithfulneſs of God in the promiſe) without effect? God forbid ſaith he; yea let God be true; but every man a liar." He takes two of the moſt degenerate periods in the Jewiſh church—the days of Elijah, and his own days, and reaſons thus upon them, Rom. 11. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. "I ſay then hath God caſt away his people? God forbid. For I alſo am an Iſraelite of the ſeed of Abraham of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not caſt away his people whom he fore-knew. Wot ye not what the ſcripture ſaith of Elias? How he maketh interceſſion to God againſt Iſrael, ſaying, Lord they have killed thy Prophets and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone and they ſeek my life." But what ſaith the anſwer of God to him? "I have reſerved to myſelf ſeven thouſand men who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal: Even ſo then, at this preſent time, there is a remnant according to the election of grace." The meaning of the promiſe then evidently is, that of this ſeed he would always have a generation to do him juſtice. And if in the moſt degenerate times a number of pious perſons can be found, according to the Apoſtle, the faithfulneſs of God is not without effect; but is accompliſhed in its true meaning.

I will ſtate another caſe. The Iſraelites to whom in the firſt in-

ſtance, pertained the promiſe, have been broken off, and caſt out for more than ſeventeen hundred years; now ſhould God graft them in again, and make them partakers of the root and fatneſs of the good Olive tree; make them by faith heirs of God, and joint heirs with Chriſt; would not every chriſtian rejoice in the faithfulneſs of God; and believe that he had remembered his promiſe to Abraham, in cauſing the bleſſing to deſcend upon his ſeed—Then if not only individuals; but intermediate generations may appoſtatiſe from the God of their Fathers; and yet the faithfulneſs of God not be without effect: The meaning muſt be, that of the ſeed of the faithful, God will always preſerve his church. And it would not be a very difficult taſk to ſhew, that ſince the days of Abraham, to the preſent time, God has preſerved his church of the ſeed of the faithful: though in its progreſs he hath added thouſands of Gentiles to it.

THE way is now prepared, diſtinctly to ſtate the reaſons of my belief.

FROM the review we have taken of the covenant of grace and its privileges, it clearly appears that the ſame Goſpel was preached to Abraham which is preached unto us. That the ſame covenant, with the ſame mediator, was made known to him, that is made known to us. The ſame faith with the ſame promiſe "I will be a God to you and to your ſeed after you," and that this promiſe, in its full extent, was ſigned and ſealed to Abraham. That baptiſm anſwers eſſentially the ſame purpoſe to every believing child of Abraham. And as the promiſe "I will be a God to you and to your ſeed after you" is to all whom the Lord our God ſhall call, they have a right to the ſign, and ſeal of this promiſe in its extent alſo—A ſign of what it means to have God for their God—That he will give them a new heart, and put a right ſpirit within them, and enable them to perfect holineſs in his fear.

THAT all, who give ſcriptural evidence of faith in Chriſt and of Repentence toward God, have a right to be baptiſed, few I ſuppoſe will deny, who believe the Bible, and feel the force of ſuch ſcriptures as theſe.—"He that believeth, and is baptiſed, ſhall be ſaved." Repent and be baptiſed for the remiſſion of ſins." And why baptiſed? We know, that ſalvation is inſeparately connected with faith and repentance; but not with baptiſm; or Simon Magus would have been ſaved. The caſe ſtands thus: He that believeth ſhall be ſaved, and baptiſm is the ſign and pledge of the faithfulneſs of God, that he will ſave him. He that repents ſhall have his ſins remitted, and baptiſm is a ſign and pledge, or ſeal, that they ſhall be remitted. Now he that believeth, and is baptiſed has this promiſe "I will be a god to you" ſealed; but if he is of faith he is heir to another promiſe; or another part of the ſame promiſe. "I will be a God to your ſeed after you; therefore as an heir he has a right to have this part of the promiſe ſealed, as well as the former therefore he has a right to have his houſe baptiſed, as a teſtimony to him of God's faithfulneſs in performing his promiſe to his ſeed alſo.

Let us now enquire what were the ſentiments, and practice of the Apoſtles upon this ſubject.

That they believed the covenant revealed to Abraham to be the Goſpel covenant, has been fully ſtated, and proved. I ſhall only add a paſſage or two more. In the 3d chapter to the Epheſians, the Apoſtle tells us "that it was a myſtery which was not revealed to the children of Men in ages paſt (and would to God that it was not a hidden myſtery to many in our day) v. 6 That the Gentiles ſhould be fellow-*heirs* and of the ſame *body*, and partakers of his *promise* in Chriſt by the Goſpel. To the ſame purpoſe he reaſons in the 11th chapter to the Romans; when he tells the believing Gentiles "that they were grafted into the good Olive, from which the Iſraelites, through unbelief, were broken off; and that they by faith partook of the root, and fatneſs of that good Olive. If we take the Olive to mean the viſible church, and the root and fatneſs of the Olive to mean the covenant and its promiſes; or the Olive to mean the covenant, and the root and fatneſs the promiſes; it will amount to this; that the Goſpel church, and the covenant and promiſes, upon which it is founded, are eſſentially the ſame with the Jewiſh. And however the two diſpenſations differ in their appendages or outward dreſs, the ſubſtance of both is the ſame.

Then how did the Apoſtles proceed under this perſuaſion? They baptiſed the believer, and his houſe. Paul baptiſed the houſe of Stephanas, Cor. 1. 16. Stephanas was a believer, the firſt fruits of Achia, the firſt believer at Corrinth, and as the Apoſtles baptiſed all profeſſing believers; Stephanas a d his houſe were baptiſed. This was the beginning of the firſt Corrinthian church. Lydia was the firſt believer at Phllippi; and Paul and Silas baptiſed her and her houſe. Thus they founded the Phillippian church. The ſecond believer whom we have an account of at Phillippi was the keeper of the priſon, Acts 16. 33. who was baptiſed, and all his ſtraitway. As his caſe is ſo pointed to my purpoſe, I ſhall take the liberty to make a few obſervations upon it—Paul and Silas were ſhamefully intreated at Phillippi as ye know, they were caſt into Priſon, and their feet made faſt in the ſtocks. At midnight, they prayed, and ſang praiſes to God, and the priſoners heard them. And ſuddenly there was an earthquake, ſo that the foundations of the priſon were ſhaken; and immediately all the doors were opened; and every one's bands were looſed. And the keeper of the priſon awaking out of his ſleep, and ſeeing the priſon doors open, he drew out his ſword, and would have killed himſelf, ſuppoſing, that the priſoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, ſaying, do thyſelf no harm, for we are all here. Then he called for a light end ſprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and ſaid, ſirs, what muſt I do to be ſaved; The ſame importunate earneſt queſtion was propoſed by the multitude to the Apoſtles upon the day of Penticoſt. Men and Brethren, what ſhall we do? Peter replies, "Repent and be baptiſed every one of you, in the name of Jeſus Chriſt,

for the remiſſion of ſins, for the *promise* is to you, and to your children; and to all who are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God ſhall call," Peter's anſwer was to the Jews, who knew the promiſe, and valued themſelves upon the privilege of having God for their God, and the God of their ſeed. But add the words of the promiſe, and the reply will be thus—Repent and be baptiſed every one of you, in the name of Jeſus Chriſt, for the remiſſion of ſins; for God will be your God and the God of your children; and the God of all who are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God ſhall call.—Paul and Silas replied to the ſame queſtion—Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt and thou ſhalt be ſaved and thy houſe.—Subſtitute the words of the promiſe, and the anſwer will be—Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and God will be your God, and the God of your houſes.

In this view both the anſwers amount to the ſame thing. And that this is the meaning of Paul and Silas will be fully evinced by what follows. Verſe 32. And they ſpake unto him the word of the Lord, and to *all* that were in his houſe. Here they fulfil their commiſſion, to preach the Goſpel to every creature. The keeper of the priſon was a public man, and had a number of perſons about his houſe. There were a number of priſoners we know, and they ſpake the word of the Lord to all that were in his houſe. Verſe 38. And he took them the ſame hour of the night and waſhed their ſtripes; and was baptiſed, and all his ſtraightway. Hence you ſee a diſtinction between thoſe, who were in his houſe, and thoſe who belonged to his houſe. They had exhorted him to believe; and told him that God would be his God, and the God of his houſe. He believed; and as a ſeal or pledge that God would be his God, they baptiſed him; and as a ſeal, that God would be the God of his houſe, they baptiſed his houſe. Verſe 34. And when he had brought them into his houſe, he ſet meat before them; and rejoiced believing in God, with all his houſe. Our Engliſh tranſlation throws ſome obſcurity upon the latter clauſe of this verſe; but in the original, it is exceeding clear. A literal tranſlation of which is; "He rejoiced with all his houſe, he having believed in God." Nothing can be more to the purpoſe. And if the writer of the Acts had foreſeen all the diſputation, which has taken place in after ages, I do not ſee how he could have been more guarded, and particular in his narratives—Abraham believed God, and had the ſeal of the promiſe applied to himſelf, and to his houſe—The gailor believed God, and thereby became an heir through faith, and as ſuch had the ſeal of God's promiſe applied to him, and to his houſe.

It is certain, that the bleſſing of Abraham deſcends to the believing Gentile, and he becomes an heir through faith, and as an heir, has a right to the ſeal of God's faithfulneſs; but this is not the reaſon that will juſtify me as a miniſter of the Goſpel, in applying the ſeal to him and his houſe—A promiſe contains ſome good thing which I am to expect, and may give a right to privilege; but a precept only can enjoin duty—It is the believer's privilege to have the ſeal of God's

faithfulneſs applied to himſelf, and to his houſe. But where is the precept, that makes it my duty to apply the ſeal, in this extenſive manner. This precept, "go teach all nations, baptiſing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," is not ſo preciſely definite, as to preclude all doubtful diſputation, in theſe latter days. Something, therefore, more definite, or ſomething explanatory of this precept, is become neceſſary—The Apoſtles, to whom this precept was firſt given, acted under the immediate direction and illumination of Chriſt, the king, and head of his church—Whatever they did in regulating, and eſtabliſhing the churches; they did by his immediate direction, and authority. Their example, therefore, expreſſes to me the mind of Chriſt, and has all the force of a precept. It ſhews me how Chriſt would have his church regulated; and how he would have his miniſters to act—They baptiſed the profeſſing believer and his houſe—This is to me a precept and at the ſame time gives me the true meaning of the original precept given by Chriſt himſelf. Mat. 28. 28.

I THEREFORE CONCLUDE, that where I meet a man, who profeſſes faith in Chriſt, and repentance toward God, who was not before baptiſed, that it is my duty, as a Goſpel miniſter, to baptiſe him, and ALL HIS STRAIGHTWAY.

In proceſs of time it will probably happen, that ſome of the believer's houſe will grow up to maturity, and become heir through faith. Then the queſtion will be, what ſhall be done with theſe? Shall I baptiſe them again? Or ſhall I admit them into the church, upon the baptiſm they received when only members of the houſe of a believer.

For anſwer, we muſt have recourſe to the example of the Apoſtles, and the reaſons of the caſe—The Apoſtle Paul lived to at leaſt the year 64, and John lived until the year 90. If men propagated and grew then, as they do now: there muſt have been a great number grown up to the years of maturity whilſt ſome of the Apoſtles were living, who had been baptiſed in the houſes of profeſſed believers. And if the promiſe of God was not without effect in thoſe days (and it never can be proved that it was) a number of them believed, and became heirs according to the promiſe—Now the Apoſtles either baptiſed theſe; or they did not. There is no example upon record that they did; and therefore it cannot be proved. And ſhould I baptiſe ſuch, I would act altogether without authority—But the ſilence of the New-Teſtament is a ſtrong preſumption to my mind, that they did not. For I cannot allow myſelf to believe, that, a matter ſo material for the direction of future practice, would have been omitted, had it been the mind of Chriſt that ſuch ſhould be baptiſed again. And the reaſon of the caſe ſtill confirms me the more, that they did not—It is not bapiiſm which gives a right to the covenant of promiſe—It is faith only—If ye are of faith, then are ye Abraham's ſeed and heirs according to the promiſe—And he that believeth ſhall be

saved. The Promise is made to the believer only. And baptism is no more than a sign, and seal of the faithfulness of God. And as the persons under consideration had the seal affixed to them for the confirmation of the believing master of the house; and the promise is now fulfilled in turning these of his house from unrighteousness to serve the living God; baptism becomes as certainly a seal to them, when administered before faith, as it would be if administered after faith. It therefore appears to be both unnecessary and without warrant to baptise them again—That they have a right to have their house baptised upon an understanding profession of faith in Christ and repentence towards God, has been fully proved. I therefore conclude that it is my duty to baptise the house of such, without repeating it to themselves.

We are now to shew, what is the scriptural mode in which this ordinance ought to be administered.

The term Baptism, in scripture, signifies washing. Mark 7. 4. "The Pharisees, when they come from market, except they wash they eat not, and many other things their be, which they have received to hold; as the *washing* of cups, and pots, and brazen vessels and of tables. Luke 11. 38. And as he spake a certain Pharasee besought him to dine with him; and he went in and sat down to meat. And when the Pharasee saw it, he marvelled, that he had not first *washed* before dinner. Hebrews 9. 10. Which stood in meats, and drinks, and diverse *washings*."—In the original it is the baptism of cups, and pots, and of brasen vessels, and of tables. The Pharisee marvelled that he had not *baptised* before dinner. And part of the service of the first tabernacle consisted in diverse baptisms—Why, the translators of the Bible chose to render the word in one place by the English word *washing*; and in another by the Greek word *baptism*: I will not pretend to say. I cannot help, however, being of opinion, that if they had preserved a spirit of uniformity in this case, it might have prevented a great deal of doubtful disputation. In the places above cited they have rendered the word, *washing*, which in Hebrews 6. 2. they have rendered *baptisms*. Had they rendered the word uniformly either *washing*, or baptism, there certainly would have been less confusion. Though now to an English ear accustomed to the Bible, it would sound harsh, and almost prophane, to say the baptism of cups and pots and tables—and he marvelled that he had not baptised before dinner. It would produce nearly the same effect, to say, "As many of you as have been *washed* into Christ have put on Christ." "And what shall they do who are *washed* for the dead, if the dead rise not." But had the same term been used, in the translation, to signify the application of water to the human person, to represent the cleansing of the blood and spirit of Christ; and to signify the cleansing of cups, and pots and tables: We would have had the same idea affixed to both actions; and of the manner of applying water the same in both cases; only one more sacred; and the other more common. To a Grecian ear it was quite easy and familiar,

to hear of *baptising* cups and tables, baptising before dinner; and baptising the human person in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: because they had the same idea of the manner of applying water in all these cases. It is, however now, become a matter of some importance, to determine with precision the manner of applying water in the administration of that sacred ordinance of the New-Testament, called water baptism.

Some have been very positive, that dipping is the true Apostolic mode, whilst others affirm that sprinkling has the sanction of divine authority. I hope, I shall not offend, whilst I offer the reasons, why the arguments on both sides appear inconclusive—The cases of the baptism of Jesus, and the Eunuch have had great weight with many—Let us examine these cases. Mat. 3. 16 "And Jesus when he was baptised went up straightway out of the water. Acts 8. 38. And they went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch and he baptised him; and when they were come up out of the water." It has been contended, that the little Greek words translated *into* and *out of* might be translated *to* and *from*—It is true, they do sometimes signify *to* and *from*, but I feel no reluctance to admit the present translation; because it concludes nothing either way—Jesus came up out of the water after he was *washed* by John; but whether this washing was performed by dipping, sprinkling the water upon him, pouring, or by lifting it, and applying it by rubbing, is not determined. Philip and the Eunuch went down both of them into the water, and Philip *washed* him.

Suppose it was asserted, that Philip washed him, by pouring the water upon him. How could the supposition be proved erroneous? I know of no other way, but by another supposition—Suppose he dipt him—Now he that supposes he dipt him, will be certain that he is in the right—Then of course the supposition that he poured the water upon him will be erroneous—But admit a third supposition; that Philip lifted the water, and applied it to him in the common form of washing, by rubbing—Then both the former suppositions will be erroneous—Admit a fourth, that he sprinkled the water upon him—And all the other three will be erroneous—I am of opinion, any of these suppositions will answer equally well, whether they went into the water, or stood at the water's edge—Again it is said John 3. 23. And John also was baptising in Ænon, near to Salim; because there was much water there, and they came, and were baptised. The question now is, why did John choose a place where there was much water; unless it were for the purpose of dipping; in the very concise history given of John the baptist, we are told that he baptised in Jordan; and Mark tells us positively, that John did baptise in the wilderness. If John uniformly washed those, whom he judged proper subjects, by dipping—I ask where he got water in the wilderness of sufficient depth for his purpose? If this question cannot be definitely and satisfactorily answered—Shall I conclude that John did not dip. It would be a rash, and unjustifiable conclusion; for however rare to find wa-

ter in the wilderneſs; it might have been for what I know, and either to ſay there was or was not, would be a mere conjecture. And I cannot allow myſelf to found any Goſpel doctrine, duty or privilege upon conjecture. But ſtill the queſtion is unanſwered. What was John's reaſon for being at Jordan, and Ænon, if it was not for the purpoſe of dipping? if I cannot form a reaſon, or more properly a conjecture more plauſible. He that aſks the queſtion, will be fully ſatisfied that his conjecture is right; and go away, and proclaim it to be the word of God—But admit that this conjecture is oppoſed by another; that the reaſon why John reſorted to thoſe places where there was much water, was that the multitude, who attended his miniſtry, might have water to drink and their beaſts alſo, and eſpeically if they tarried all night; as it is probable, the multitude did upon ſome extraordinary occaſions in thoſe days. Now is there any man upon earth, who can tell, with infallible certainty, which of theſe conjectures is right? I am induced to believe there is not. And yet it is probable, that ſome perſons might be found, the one part of whom would believe the one conjecture; and another part the other conjecture; and each endeavour to impoſe his own upon the world for divine truth; but had the caſe of John's baptiſm been more than a conjecture, and admitted of no diſpute, as to the mode of applying water, it could be neither proof, nor precedent to warrant a chriſtian miniſter to apply it in the ſame way; becauſe the order of the Goſpel church was not then eſtabliſhed; and John's baptiſm was not complete in all its circumſtances—For admitting, that it was the ſame Goſpel covenant, with the ſame promiſes, which John preached, that was preached to Abraham, and to the children of Iſrael; and afterwards was preached by the Apoſtles; and that this baptiſm was a ſeal, or pledge of confirmation, that the true penitent ſhould be ſaved: yet in the judgment of the Apoſtles, it was imperfect in ſome of the particulars of its mode of adminiſtration; and therefore to be laid aſide, when the clearer light ſhone out. Acts 19. 3. 4. 5. "Paul came to Epheſus, and found certain diſciples, and ſaid unto them, unto what were ye baptiſed? And they ſaid unto John's baptiſm: then ſaid Paul, John verily baptiſed with the baptiſm of repentence, ſaying unto the people, that they ſhould believe on him, which ſhould come after him, that is on Chriſt Jeſus. When they heard this, they were baptiſed in the name of the Lord Jeſus." So defective was John's baptiſm, that Paul judged it expedient to baptiſe them over again.

I SHALL now proceed to examine the practice of the Apoſtles in eſtabliſhing the Goſpel churches.

THE firſt account we have of their baptiſing, after the aſcenſion of our Lord was on the day of Penticoſt. Acts 2. 41 "Then they that gladly received the word were baptiſed; and the ſame day were added unto the church about three thouſand ſouls." Theſe three thouſand perſons were waſhed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; but not the leaſt hint of either dipping, or ſprinkling in the caſe. Some have conjectured, that it was impoſſible they

could be all dipped, as it appears to have been done in the city Jeruſalem; and Peter's preaching, their profeſſion of faith, and baptiſm, were all in the ſpace of about nine hours: for Peter began to preach at the third hour. But if in oppoſition to this conjecture you aſſert that they were dipped: then it will follow that was poſſible. For if it was done; it was poſſible to be done. Now he, that believes the conjecture, will diſbelieve the aſſertion; and he, that believes the aſſertion, will diſbelieve the conjecture. For my part I cannot fully believe either 1ſt. I think it was poſſible: however unlikely it may appear to others—Peter began to ſpeak to the multitude about the third hour, which anſwers to our nine, before noon. And allowing one hour for his ſpeech, and neceſſary preparations, as preparing proper cloaths, and going to the pool of Siloam, or ſome other place, where there was water; then there remained eight hours, which brought into ſeconds, and divided by three thouſand, gives about nine ſeconds and an half, to receive the profeſſion and baptiſe each one; ſuppoſing Peter to have done the whole. But ſuppoſe the other eleven to have aſſiſted, it will allow near two minutes for each. 2d. I cannot believe the aſſertion becauſe it is deſtitute of all ſhadow of proof. In the caſe of the Samaritans recorded Acts 8. 12. And of thoſe of who were aſſembled at the houſe of Cornelius Acts 10. 47. and of the jailor Acts 16. 33, there is nothing that has the leaſt appearance of dipping, not even to form a credible conjecture. If it certainly was the practice of the Apoſtles to apply water in that form; the writer of the Acts was guilty of a very great omiſſion, in not recording it, in one inſtance at leaſt. That of the keeper of the priſon might have been very pertinent; as the providence of God would have been illuſtrated in preſerving them from the guards of the city, whilſt they went to, and came from the water; or he might have informed us that the jailor had a ciſtern in his houſe; if it had been ſo.

I HAVE been told, that the Apoſtle alludes to the practice of dipping, Rom. 6. 4. when he ſaith, "we are buried with him by baptiſm, into death; that like as Chriſt was raiſed up from the dead by the glory of the father, even ſo, we alſo ſhould walk in newneſs of life." When any practice is alluded to, that practice ſhould be diſtinctly known, in order that the ſentiment intended to be conveyed by the alluſion, may be diſtinctly known alſo. But if the practice be doubtful, as it muſt be, if there is no better proof than the alluſion; the inſtruction intended to be given muſt be very obſcure and uncertain. The Apoſtle, to be conſiſtent with himſelf, which was always to be plain and pointed, ſhould have eſtabliſhed that point ſo clearly, that it could not be doubted, that it was his practice to bury the ſubjects of baptiſm under water; and then his alluſion would be pertinent and ſtriking. But he has not done ſo; I therefore cannot reſt my faith upon aſſertions and conjectures without proof. But admitting the practice of dipping in theſe latter ages of the church to be in alluſion to the burial of Chriſt, I think the alluſion is far from being compleat. We are told Luke 23, 53, "That Joſeph took the body of Jeſus, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a ſepulchre that was

hewn in a ſtone;" and afterward "that the ſepulchre was covered with a ſtone." From this it appears, that the earth did not touch the body of Jeſus at all. And if alluſions be ſufficient to eſtabliſh a doctrine, or practice in the Chriſtian church, it is not neceſſary that the water ſhould touch the body in baptiſm—Paul in writing to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. 10. 12. ſaith, Moreover, Brethren, I would not that ye ſhould be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all paſſed through the ſea; and were all baptiſed into Moſes in the cloud and in the ſea. The hiſtory of the paſſage of the Iſraelites through the ſea, informs us, that they walked upon dry land in the midſt of the ſea; and the waters were a wall unto them, on their right hand, and on their left. Here it does not appear that the water touched the bodies of the Iſraelites; and yet it is called baptiſm. In 1 Pet. 3. 20. 21. the Apoſtle ſaith, "that eight ſouls were ſaved in the ark by water; the like figure whereunto baptiſm doth now ſave us"—The water did not touch the bodies of theſe eight perſons; but was up the ſides of the ark.—Now, ſuppoſe ſomething to be made of ſtone, or wood, in the form of a ſepulchre; or in modern language, of a coffin, a little deeper than the human body, and laid in the water to at leaſt its depth, and the ſubject, to be baptiſed taken and wrapped in linen, and carried in form of a corps, and laid in this ſepulchre, ark or coffin, and the words of inſtitution pronounced over the ſubject by a proper perſon—The likeneſs would be much more complete, and every part of the proceſs be juſtifiable by ſcripture alluſion—Then we might ſay with propriety, we are buried with him by baptiſm into death.

I SHALL now ſtate what appears to me the plain and unequivocal meaning of the Apoſtle, Rom. 6. 4. He had been juſt ſtating, and proving the doctrine of juſtification by faith alone, and had aſſerted, that the abounding of ſin gave occaſion to the abounding of grace, in its pardon. He foreſaw, that an objection would be made to the doctrine (and which indeed has been made a thouſand times ſince his day) that if the abounding of ſin gave occaſion to the abounding of grace; then we may continue in ſin, that grace may abound: This inference he rejects from his doctrine with abhorrence; God forbid ſaith he, how ſhall we that are dead to ſin live any longer therein! Know ye not that, as many of us, as were baptiſed in the name of Chriſt, profeſſed that we hated, and had forſaken ſin, and engaged to live holy, as God is holy; and our baptiſm was a ſign and pledge, that ſin ſhould die. That as Chriſt had ſuffered death for ſin, and riſen again; ſo we ſhould die to ſin, and riſe again to newneſs of life. It is ſaid that the primary meaning of the word *baptise*, is to dip or immerſe; and that we ſhould not admit the ſecondary meaning of words, when the firſt can be retained.

I THINK I have not ſeen fewer than half a dozen Lexicons quoted, to prove that dipping was the primary meaning of baptiſm. I know that a ſchool boy, habituated to look his Lexicon for the meaning of words, comes at laſt to look upon it of equal authority with his bible.

If he finds the latin word *immersion* placed first in the range of words given to expreſs the meaning of the word *baptism;* he is aſſuredly convinced *that* muſt be its primary meaning; and without farther heſitation pronounces dipping the inſtitution of Chriſt. But I hope, I ſhall ſtand excuſed, when I ſay, that the arrangement of words in a hundred Lexicons, would not prove it to me. Becauſe dictionaries and Lexicons, however valuable to give a general knowledge of the language, we would wiſh to learn; yet they are not calculated to give us the preciſe ſentiment which a word conveys in any particular compoſition. If any thing important depends upon the meaning of a word; we muſt conſult the beſt and pureſt writers in that language, who have written upon branches of knowledge, which are the ſame, or ſimilar to the one of which the thing in doubt is a part; and by carefully obſerving how they uſe the word in ſimilar caſes, we may fix its definite meaning.—Again, if we wiſh to know preciſely the ſentiment intended to be conveyed by a word in a particular book or compoſition; we muſt obſerve how the writer uſes the word in other parts of his book, and by comparing the different places together, we may be able to fix with preciſion the meaning which the author gives to it. Let us apply theſe rules, which I am perſuaded, no man of ſcience will diſpute, to the caſe before us; if we would know the meaning of the Greek word *baptise*, we muſt ſearch the beſt and pureſt Greek writers, and obſerve how they uſe the word, and having thus fixed its meaning, we ſhall be able to uſe it with propriety; if we intend to write an accurate compoſition in Greek. But ſtill we ſhall not be able, with ſufficient preciſion, to fix its meaning in that compoſition called the New Teſtament; and eſpecially, as our faith and practice reſpecting a particular doctrine and duty depend upon it.—We muſt ſearch the New Teſtament itſelf, and compare the different places where it is uſed; and from this compariſon find how the ſacred writers uſed it. And their meaning is the meaning we are bound to fix to it; whether it be the firſt, ſecond, third or fourth meaning of the author of a Lexicon. This I have done; and fully proved that the meaning of *baptism* in the New Teſtament is *waſhing*. And have not been able in more than twenty years, which I have been converſant with the Greek Teſtament, to find one place where it definitely, and unequivocally ſignifies dipping.

Most of the reaſoning which I have uſed to ſhew, why I do not believe, that dipping is the ſcriptural mode of uſing water in Chriſtian baptiſm, will apply to ſprinkling, I need not therefore ſwell my book by repeating them. I believe the one to be as void of ſcriptural authority as the other, being founded upon conjectures reſpecting the meaning of ſcripture alluſions. It has been proved that the ſcriptural meaning of *baptism* is waſhing. I therefore apprehend, that the true mode of adminiſtering the ordinance is by applying water in the form of waſhing—What that form is, let us now enquire.

Waſhing is one of thoſe actions, which is common and univerſal. All nations practice it, and perform it nearly in the ſame way—The

ſavage and the polite citizen—The Jew and the Chriſtian, adopt nearly the ſame mode, without any ſpecial revelation about it; or receiving inſtructions the one from the other. The nature of the caſe, common ſenſe, and a little experience inſtructs them all; and being all educated the ſame way, they all practiſe in the ſame mode—Let any of them have a cup, or a table to waſh clean, and you will obſerve little difference—In the proceſs of waſhing there is a double operation. The firſt is performed by applying water with rubbing; which takes off the groſſer parts of the filth, and ſoftens the remainder. This being the moſt neceſſary part of the proceſs, has, in our language obtained the name of waſhing. After the filth is ſoftened the ſecond operation is performed by dipping the ſubject into the water; or pouring the water plentifully upon it; which is called rincing.—

THE waſhing in the New Teſtament was to make clean—The Phariſees made clean the outſide of the cup and platter.—Now in modern times a ceremonious dipping would not anſwer the end of making a cup, a pot, a braſen veſſel or a table clean; but firſt apply water with rubbing and then dip the veſſel and pour water upon the table, and they would be clean—This is the form of waſhing, which I have obſerved all the different nations uſe, to which I have had acceſs. And even in waſhing the human body, when it has collected filth, the ſame proceſs is uſed. The common action of waſhing the hands and face is, I believe uniformly performed by applying water with rubbing.

IT is ſcarcely needful to mention, that ſprinkling is made uſe of to certain kinds of cloaths; but this I do not take to be a part of the proceſs of waſhing; it is done, after they are waſhed and dried, to prepare them to take a gloſs from the iron.

Now, as water baptiſm is not intedned for putting away the filth of the fleſh, but a repreſentation of the purification of the mind, it muſt be wholly immaterial, whether a large or a ſmall quantity of water be uſed. This ſentiment is, I think, fully taught by our Lord in the reply he made to Peter, John 13. 10 "He had poured water into a baſon, and began to waſh the diſciples feet. He cometh to Peter; and Peter ſaith thou ſhalt never waſh my feet. Jeſus anſwered him, if I waſh thee not, thou haſt no part with me." Peter ſuppoſing the greater the quantity; the greater the efficacy, ſaith unto him; Lord, not my feet only; but alſo my hands and my head. Jeſus ſaith unto him, he that is waſhed, needeth not, ſave to waſh his feet; but is clean every whit. It is evident this was a ſignificant waſhing; If I waſh thee not, thou haſt no part with me." And the efficacy did not depend upon the quantity of water; but upon the fitneſs of the ſign to point out the thing ſignified "He that is waſhed needeth not ſave to waſh his feet; but is clean every whit."

UPON the whole then, I conclude, that water baptiſm is rightly performed by the application of water, with rubbing; or [illegible]

ticularly, by wetting the hand in water, and rubbing it over the face, whilſt the words of inſtitution are pronouncing.

I PROCEED now to anſwer ſome queſtions for the ſatisfaction of ſerious enquirers.

QUESTION 1ſt. What is to be done, where only one of the heads of a houſe, and that perhaps the female, profeſſes faith in Chriſt, and repentance towards God; ſhall the houſehold be baptiſed or not?

THE Apoſtle in his firſt epiſtle to the Cor. 7, 14, gives an anſwer to this queſtion, which is ſufficiently ſatisfactory to me—"For the unbelieving huſband is ſanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is ſanctified by the huſband; elſe were your children unclean, but now are they holy." Here it is evedent, that where either of the parents is a believer, ſome ſpecial advantage is derived to the children, "Elſe were your children unclean, but now are they holy."—and this ſpecial privilege, if no other, is derived to them. They are brought within the promiſe of God—"I will be a God to your ſeed after you." And as it has been proved, that this promiſe is to every individual believer in Chriſt; It therefore follows that every viſible, or profeſſing believer, has a right to the ſeal of God's promiſe in its full extent; to their ſeed as well as to themſelves. And the unbelief of the neareſt relation upon earth does not, nor cannot, deprive them of it. I may here, with propriety, remark, that there has been great difficulty in fixing the meaning of the term *holy*, in this place. Some would chooſe to render it, *legitimate*; and read the latter part of the verſe thus, "Elſe were your children baſtards;" but now are they legitimate, or lawfully born—If this interpretation be admitted; it will follow, that by the appointment of God a very ſpecial privilege is derived to the children, in conſequence of one of the parents being a believer, viz. to be born legitimate. I have ſaid, this privilege muſt be derived to them by the appointment of God, becauſe there was no other way by which it could be derived. The Roman commonwealth granted no privileges, at that time, to believers, or their ſeed. It was not becauſe Paul's parents were believers, that he was freeborn. Then if to be lawfully born, which every man, in every nation, counts an honour, and a privilege, be derived to the children from one of the parents being a believer, why ſhould it be thought a ſtrange or incredible thing to thoſe, who admit the above interpretation, that another privilege ſhould be derived to them by the ſame divine appointment, viz. that they come within the promiſe of God, "I will be a God to your ſeed after you." Or why ſhould they ſcruple to addreſs ſuch, as Peter did the Jews, Acts 3, 25, "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers; ſaying unto Abraham, and in thy ſeed ſhall all the kindreds of the earth be bleſſed."

But the above interpretation cannot be admitted; for the following reasons. 1st. If the term *holy* signifies *legitimate*, the Apostle's reasoning will be thus, "Else were your children bastards; but now are they legtimate." Else," that is, if one of them were not a believer. Now it has not been proved, and I will go farther, and say, it cannot be proved, either from the laws of God, or the civil laws of any nation, then upon earth, that infidelity, in the parents, rendered the children illegitimate. 2d. It has not been proved, that the word rendered *holy* in this place, signifies legitimate, in any other place in the sacred writings. And until this is done, it will be arbitrary, and unjustifiable to give it such an interpretation.

To fix the meaning of the term in this place, we must search the scriptures, and endeavor to find how it is used in other parts of that composition; and then we shall be able to give it a consistent meaning here. The result of such a search will be, that whatever was given to God, or employed in his service, was called holy, whether it was internally holy or not—and whatever was not appropriated to his service, or used according to his appointment, was unclean. The vessels of the sanctuary were called holy, 1 Cron. 22, 19—"Now set your heart, and your soul to seek the Lord your God: arise therefore, and build the sanctuary of the Lord God, to bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and the *holy* vessels of God into the house, that is to be built to the name of the Lord." The tithe, which was paid to support the service of God, was called holy, Lev. 27, 30—"And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lords; it is holy unto the Lord. The first born of Israel, both man and beast, because they were separated, and appointed to the service of God, are said to be sanctified, or holy, Exo. 13, 2—"Sanctify unto me all the first born, whatsoever openeth the womb, amongst the children of Israel, both of man, and of beast, it is mine." "Numbers 8, 17—"For all the first born of Israel are mine, both man and beast, on the day that I smote every first born in the land of Egypt, I *sanctified* them for myself." The Persian army, that served under Cyrus, are called the Lord's sanctified ones, Isaiah 13, 3—"I have commanded my *sanctified* ones, I have also called my mighty ones." Now if whatever was devoted to the service of God was called *holy*—Why should it be deemed a strange thing, that the children of a believing parent should be called *holy*; for the same reason. And if God's appointing the first born of Israel, both of man, and beast, to his service, and the children of Israel devoting them to that service, be termed *sanctifying* them, why should it be thought incredible, that a believing wife giving up her husband, and her children to God; or a believing husband giving up his wife, and children to God, should also be termed *sanctifying* them. For my part, I have no more difficulty to believe, that true faith will certainly lead to such a surrender, than I have to believe, that it will lead

to holiness of life. This interpretation pleases me the rather; because it is scriptural, easily understood, and conformable to universal experience. That man, or woman, who would lay claim to the title of a believer, and never felt a disposition of soul to give their friends, their relations, and their neighbours, to God, could not prevail upon me to subscribe to their title.

I WOULD paraphrase the words thus, "The unbelieving husband is devoted to God by the wife; and the unbelieving wife is devoted to God by the husband;" and if faith did not produce this effect; your children would be left in the state of unbelievers children, unappropriated to the service of God; but now it is quite otherwise; they are given up and appointed to his use. I think it probable that a critic would translate, and interpret the words in the following manner: The unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife; and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the husband; else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. This is much more literal, than the common translation; and the interpretation would be, "The promise is to the bellever and his, or her seed, and in the line of faith is the seed to be counted;" therefore, that unfitness for the service of God, and exclusion from this special promise, which is the lot of the unbelieving husband, is dissolved in the wife; and does not descend. And the same unfitness and exclusion, in the unbelieving wife is dissolved in the husband, and does not descend; but if this unfitness and exclusion did descend, then would your children be unclean—unappropriated to the service of God, and excluded from his promise; but now are they holy, *i. e.* given up to the service of God, and brought within his promise, "I will be a God to your seed after you."

QUESTION 2d. Who are to be counted the household? It may happen, that a man may embrace the gospel, who has a numerous family, and some of them grown up, and profligate in their lives. Are these to be baptised? Or he may have a numerous train of servants; some of whom may be old and wicked—are these also to be baptised?—For removing this difficulty, a few observations will be necessary.

IN the management of a state, or a commonwealth, some rule must be fixed, which will apply to the great mass of the people, to ascertain the time, when minors shall be capable to act for themselves; and be no longer accounted part of the house; which in this state is twenty-one for males, and eighteen for females. It has not pleased the head of the church to fix any particular age; but has left the matter to the judgment of those, who have the power of the keys; or who are vested with authority to administer the ordinances of the gospel, and the regulation of these general rules—"Let all things be done to edification"—"Let all things be done in charity"—"Let all things be done decently and in or-

der." This, however, may be laid down as a general maxim, that all the children who are incapable to act for themselves, are to be counted the household.

THE laws of the commonwealth say they shall not be capable before the years of eighteen and twenty-one; but in the church the administrators judgment must determine.

OBSERVE 2d. The laws of this commonwealth do not contemplate servants as a part of a man's house; but as a part of his property; and, therefore have subjected them to the payment of his debts. It may therefore be impracticable for a believing master to give his servants a christian education, or to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord—Death may remove him from them, or the laws may remove them from him. The case of his children is otherwise. If he is removed by death, the laws apply his property for their education and support—and if he should have no property, the laws have made provision, that they shall have a christian education; or he himself, may have friends to whom he can commit that trust. It must therefore be left to the judgment of every christian master to determine, how far he can consistently adopt his younger servants, as a part of his house, and train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord—he will, no doubt, feel disposed to give those of his servants, who are capable to act for themselves, every advantage to receive christian instruction, which their situation requires.

QUESTION 3d. Abraham circumcised his servants, many of whom were grown up; and if we are to baptise a house, because Abraham circumcised his house—will it not follow, as a fair consequence, that we should baptise all the grown, and profligate servants which may belong to the believing master?

IN answer to this question, it may be observed, that it will always be precarious to reason from assumed principles, in positive institutions, and the conclusions will often be erroneous; because it depends upon the will of the institutor, to make what alterations he pleases; or what he may judge the state of the case requires. I have asserted and proved, that the covenant revealed to Abraham, was the gospel covenant—that the promise of that covenant, made to Abraham, is made to every believer in Christ—that circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of faith, or of the faithfulness of God in performing his promise—and that baptism is a seal of the same promise—but I have no where insinuated, that the mode of administration under that dispensation of the covenant, is to be continued under the present dispensation of it—nay, I have asserted, and do believe the direct contrary; that the mode is entirely changed: But from whom am I to expect certain information respecting the change, which the wisdom of God has seen

proper to make? From Chriſt and his Apoſtles, without doubt. The Apoſtles baptiſed the believer and his houſe—I conclude that I am juſtifiable in following their example; I do not therefore baptiſe the believers houſe ſimply, becauſe Abraham circumciſed his houſe; but becauſe it has pleaſed God to give the ſeal of his promiſe to his believing people now, as well as formerly. If then it can be proved, that the Apoſtles baptiſed grown and profligate ſervants, I will acquieſce; but, if it cannot, I ſhall remain in my preſent belief and practice; becauſe I can admit no more of the circumſtances of Abraham's caſe, than they admitted. I conſider them the infallible ſtandard of goſpel order and goſpel practice.

QUESTION 4. Is it not rather probable, that in the houſes mentioned in the New-Teſtament, none were baptiſed, but ſuch as believed? Paul ſaith unto the Corinthians, ye know the houſe of Stephanas, that it is the firſt fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themſelves to the miniſtry of the ſaints—their being the firſt fruits, intimates that they were believers—their addicting themſelves to the miniſtry of the ſaints, intimates that they were grown up?

To give, what is here ſaid, to the Corinthians, that force which the queſtion would ſeem to give it, that is, to be a decided proof, that that Apoſtle did not baptiſe the believer's houſe, as a ſeal of the promiſe of God to him, two things muſt be proved—1ſt. That no perſons can addict themſelves to the miniſtry of the ſaints, without faith, and 2d. That none of the houſe of Stephanas were converted from the time that he believed, until Paul wrote his firſt Epiſtle. If theſe two particulars can be made out, the inference will be clear; for the text itſelf is no direct proof, and only can be a proof by inference. Then the argument will ſtand thus; the houſe of Stephanas addicted themſelves to the miniſtry of the ſaints; but no perſons can do ſo without faith; therefore, they were all believers. And none of them were converted, from the time Paul firſt preached at Corinth, until he wrote his firſt epiſtle; therefore, they were converted, when Paul firſt preached, and of courſe were baptiſed with Stephanas, in the profeſſion of their own faith. This view of the caſe would be fully ſatisfactory to me, with regard to the houſe of Stephanas, but as it really is, it concludes nothing either againſt my belief, or practice. That the houſe of Stephanas was the firſt devoted to God in Achaia, I have no doubt; and that they ſhould be induced, by the example and authority of Stephanas their head, to treat the ſaints with peculiar reſpect, and do for them every kind office in their power, was exceeding natural. For if human nature was then, what it is now, and I believe it was, he muſt have but little experience in the world, who has not obſerved, with what kindneſs the whole family, from the leaſt to the greateſt, will treat thoſe, who are eſteemed and loved by the heads thereof. According to the common

reckoning, Paul first preached at Corinth, in the year 52; and tarried there one year and an half preaching and exhorting, and in the year 57, he wrote his first epistle; in that time I would not dispute, but some of the house of Stephanas might be made partakers of the promise, through faith. I need scarcely observe to any person, who has read the New-Testament, that the Apostles were exceedingly careful to mention, with gratitude, any kindness shown to themselves, or the saints, even by the unconverted. Paul was courteously treated by Julius, a Centurian of Augustus's band, and permitted to visit his friends at Sidon. And the barbarians of Melita shewed them no little kindness after their shipwreck. If such instances were not omitted, we need not think it strange to find the kindness of the house of the faithful, particularly recorded.

QUESTION 5. Though infant baptism be not directly supported, is it not implied; and admitting that the Apostles did baptise those houses mentioned in the New-Testament, how can it be proved, that there were infants in these houses?

LET it be remembered, that an infant is a little child, who has not learned to speak. In the bounds of my acquaintance, there are nearly as many houses which have not one such in them, as there are, which have. And if the rest of the world be like what I know, it will hold true at any given time. What has belonged to the house, or what will belong to it, does not come into the comparison. In a country, where the practice of what has been called infant baptism, is not generally admitted, it will probably happen, that a minister, whose practice is formed upon apostolic example, may baptise a great many houses, where there are no infants. I myself have baptised several houses, where there was not an infant, even in a country where it was generally admitted. If we consider the state, the world was in, when the Apostles went forth to preach Christ, the wisdom of God, and the power of God, for salvation to every one that believed; we shall find no difficulty in admitting, that they baptised a great many houses without an infant. It should then be remembered, that an infant is, by no means, an essential constituent of a household. Then it is a matter of no moment to me, whether there were infants or not, in those houses mentioned in the New-Testament. And I cannot easily conceive any thing more unprofitable, than to use arguments upon either side of the question. I am ready to confess my ignorance, at any time; and to confess that it is a piece of knowledge I have no desire of attaining—1st. Because it would be of no use to me if attained—and, 2d. Because I know of no means, which God has given upon earth, by which it could be attained. Whilst one's head is filled with infants, and infant baptism, it is exceedingly difficult precisely to take up, what the scriptures teach upon this subject. The phrase, *infant baptism*, conveys to my mind

more, than is intended by many, who uſe it. It ſeems to mean, that infants ſhould be baptiſed, becauſe they are infants. Similar phraſes convey as much. When I ſay believer's baptiſm, I mean that a believer ſhould be baptiſed; becauſe he is a believer. But by infant baptiſm, they only mean, that ſome infants ſhould be baptiſed—the infants of believing parents. Now if a believer ſhould happen to have an infant belonging to his houſe, I would baptiſe it, not becauſe it was an infant, but becauſe it was a part of a believer's houſe. For though an infant be not an eſſential conſtituent of a houſe; yet where there is one, every body knows it is a part of the houſe. And as the ſeed of the believer comes within the promiſe of God, "I will be a God to your ſeed after you." And every ſucceeding addition, that is made to his houſe, ſtands upon the ſame original ground, and the promiſe remains unaltered and unrepealed; therefore, the believer has a right to the ſeal of God's faithfulneſs at whatever time, it may pleaſe God to enlarge his houſe—if it has pleaſed God, in the depths of his wiſdom and grace, to conſtitute a moral, as well as natural relation between believer's and their ſeed; why ſhould we be offended? He commanded the believing Epheſians, Eph. 6, 4, and of courſe all believers to the end of time, to train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. And he ſaith of Abraham, Gen. 18, 19, "I know him, that he will command his children, and his houſehold, after him, and they ſhall keep the way of the Lord, to do juſtice and judgment, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham, that which he hath ſpoken of him. Now ſeeing God has been pleaſed to cauſe the bleſſing of Abraham, to deſcend upon the Gentiles, through Jeſus Chriſt, and appointed their children to be under tutors and governors, until the time appointed of the Father, when many of them ſhall receive the promiſe of the ſpirit through faith," we ought to admire and adore his wiſdom and his grace—and we ſhould not be ſurpriſed, if many who have the bible in their hands; nay, many gracious perſons ſhould not be able to underſtand this moral relation; which injoins duty on the part of the parents, and has a gracious promiſe annexed, that their labor of love ſhall not be in vain in the Lord. The natural relation, which God conſtituted between the firſt father of our race and his poſterity, by which we are men, ſeems pretty well underſtood. But that moral relation, by which we are ſinners, is underſtood by few; and by many rejected altogether. I do not mean that the moral relation, between Adam and his ſeed, and the believer and his ſeed, are either of the ſame extent or influence. All I mean is, that moral relations of whatever kind, are more difficult to be underſtood, than thoſe which are natural; and, therefore lays a foundation for the exerciſe of forbearance, and charity.

Question 6. If Baptiſm, the ſeal of God's faithfulneſs, be applied to the believer's houſe, for the confirmation of his faith—why may not his houſe be admitted to the Lord's ſupper? The

reaſon ſeems the ſame in both caſes: It will ſerve to confirm the believer's faith.

I HAVE before obſerved, that it will ever be precarious to reaſon from aſſumed principles, in poſitive inſtitutions. If Chriſt, the inſtitutor of ordinances in his church, had given either a precept or an example (which I conſider of the ſame force with a precept) I would admit them, whether I underſtood the reaſon or not. I conſider myſelf a ſervant at abſolute command. If the maſter gives me the reaſon of any of his inſtitutions, I view it as condeſcenſion in him, and deſire to be grateful for the favour; but I dare not apply any reaſons to his inſtitutions, which he hath not directed me to apply; he has given me no example of a houſe being admitted to the ſupper, upon the faith of the head of the houſe. I therefore conclude, that it is not his mind, that they ſhould be admitted. The caſe of baptiſm is exactly the reverſe.

QUESTION 7. *Is not Chriſt the ſeed mentioned in the promiſe to Abraham, Gal. 3, 16*—"Now to Abraham, and his ſeed were the promiſes made. He ſaith not, and to ſeeds as of many, but as of one, and to thy ſeed, which is Chriſt?"

IT is true the Apoſtle ſaith ſo; and it is alſo true, that the ſame Apoſtle ſaith, Rom. 9. 7, 8—"Neither becauſe they are the ſeed of Abraham, are they all children; but in Iſaac ſhall thy ſeed be called—that is, they who are the children of the fleſh, theſe are not the children of God; but the children of the promiſe are counted for the ſeed. And Gal. 4. 28—"Now we brethren as Iſaac was, are the children of promiſe. Gal. 3, 29; and if ye be Chriſt's, then are ye Abraham's ſeed, and heirs according to the promiſe." From theſe paſſages it appears, that Chriſt is the promiſed ſeed; that Iſaac is the promiſed ſeed; and believer's are the promiſed ſeed. Now the queſtion will be; how are all theſe paſſages to be reconciled? The ſtate of the caſe appears to be thus—Chriſt and his people are one moral body—he is the head, and they are the members. The covenant of promiſe was confirmed of God in Chriſt—and all the promiſes are in him; yea, and in him, Amen to the glory of God by us. So that when God promiſes to be the God of the believer, it is in Chriſt, or as a member of Chriſt's body—When he promiſes to be the God of the believer's ſeed, it is in Chriſt—when he promiſes the ſpirit through faith, it is in Chriſt—and when the bleſſing of Abraham deſcends upon the Gentiles, it is through Chriſt—He then is the promiſed ſeed, and they are the promiſed ſeed; and they are one in covenant with him.

QUESTION 8. *Is not the promiſe refered to by the Apoſtle Peter—Acts 2. 39,* "The promiſe is to you, and to your children, and to all, that "are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God

shall call." The promise delivered by the prophet Joel, and repeated by the Apostle from the 17th verse? Any person, who desires a satisfactory answer to this question, would do well to read the whole chapter carefully over, and attend to the following remarks.

In the second verse it is said, "There appeared unto them cloven tongues, like "as of fire, and sat upon each of them. And they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with tongues, as the spirit gave them utterance"—There were, at that time, dwelling at Jerusalem devout men, from every nation under Heaven. And when the report of this strange event had been spread abroad, the multitude ran together, and were amazed, and marvelled, saying, are not all these, who speak Galileans! And how do we hear them speak, in our tongues, the wonderful works of God! And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, what meaneth this? Here was an extraordinary appearance, which the multitude could not account for. But some, more rash than wise, attempted to account for it, by saying, "These men are full of new wine." Then Peter, with the eleven, stood up to address the assembly; and he had three things in view—1st. To refute the foolish opinion of those, who attempted to account for that extraordinary event, by the force of new wine —"These are not drunken as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day"—2d. To assign the true cause to the astonished multitude. This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, "And it shall come to pass in the last days saith God, I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; and your young men shall see visions; and your old men shall dream dreams. And on my servants and on my hand maids I will pour out, in those days, of my spirit; and they shall prophesy"—3dly. To prove that Jesus of Nazareth was the very Christ to convince them of their guilt; and lead them to him as the Saviour, "Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ: the desired effect followed. The multitude were convinced of sin, and cried out under deep compunction— "Men and brethren, what shall we do." Here the nature of the question is quite changed, and the answer ought to be changed too. The first question was, how shall we account for this marvelous event. Galileans, speaking in all the different tongues, wherein we were born. The prophesy of Joel answered this question. The second was, what shall we do to be saved? The Apostle immediately answers, "Repent and be baptised every one of you, in the name of the Lord Jesus, for the remission of sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Gost: For the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many, as the Lord our God shall call." These last words were offered as a motive to excite them to repentance; and it is the same

motive which Moſes uſed to induce the Iſraelites to faith, love, and obedience, when he preached the goſpel to them in the wilderneſs. In that parting ſolemn addreſs, which he made to their tribes, juſt before his death, recorded in the book of Deuteronomy, where he recapitulates what had been before delivered unto them. He gives them this encouragement, Deut. 29, 13—"That he may eſtabliſh thee to day for a people to himſelf; and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath ſaid unto thee; and as he hath ſworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Iſaac, and to Jacob." Moſes includes the whole of their tribes—their wives and their little ones; and ſaith farther—"Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath; but with him that is not here with us this day." Now the amount of what Moſes ſaith is this, believe in the Lord, that he is God, love and obey him, that he may be a God unto you, to your wives, and to your little ones; and to him that is not here, that is, him that is far off. This peculiar promiſe which God ſware to Abraham, to Iſaac, and to Jacob—"I will be a God unto you, and to your ſeed after you"—was well known to the Jews, and had obtained that pre-eminence over all other promiſes (and indeed it included all other promiſes) as to be called, *the promiſe*. The Apoſtle offers nothing, as a motive, to induce his hearers to repentance, materially different from what Moſes had, long before offered to their fathers. But notwithſtanding its antiquity, it was the moſt proper that could be offered—the great promiſe of the covenant of peace. And it would be proper, and pertinent to be offered, in ſimilar circumſtances, to this day. The words taken in this view, appear a ſuitable anſwer to the queſtion; and conformable to the genius of the goſpel. But take them to mean the propheſy of Joel; and the motive would be—you ſhall have the gift of the Holy Ghoſt to ſpeak with tongues, as ye ſee theſe do. Your ſons, and your daughters ſhall propheſy; and your young men ſhall ſee viſions; and your old men ſhall dream dreams. This would indeed be a ſtrong motive to perſons of the temper of the ſons of Sceva, or of Simon Magus, who would embrace chriſtianity, that they might be thought ſome great ones in the earth; but never could ſatisfy a conſcience agoniſing under a ſenſe of guilt—nothing but an aſſurance of pardon, and acceptance with God, can do this. Therefore, the Apoſtle, as a wiſe maſter builder, deals with them in the moſt proper manner, and ſets an example to all future miniſters. He puts them in remembrance of the diſtinguiſhed—the definite promiſe of the goſpel covenant—"I will be a God to you, and to your ſeed after you; and to all who are afar off; even as many, as the Lord our God ſhall call." If theſe laſt words refer to the Gentiles, as almoſt all commentators think they do; they are ſo general as to take in all the Gentiles to the end of the world; then the propheſy of Joel will not apply to them, For their ſons and their daughters do not propheſy, nor do their young men ſee viſions. After this ſerious review, if any perſon ſtill thinks that the Apoſtle means the pro-

phesy of Joel, I cannot envy him either of his understanding or his opinion.

QUESTION 9th. What relation do those stand in to the church, who were baptised as members of the believer's house; and how far are they subjects of church discipline?

THE relation, they stand in to the church, bears a resemblance to the relation, which a scholar stands in to a master, or a minor to a guardian. It is the duty of the church to instruct them, to admonish and call them to faith and repentance; and it is their duty to hear, and obey. The church may exercise a direct discipline, so far as admonition, and reproof can be called discipline, and an indirect discipline, through the parents. The gospel precept is, "Father's train up your children in the nurture, and admonition of the Lord." It is the duty of the church to see that all the professing believers belonging to it, walk in the commandments of the Lord blameless. If they neglect to perform any known duty, or transgress any known precept, the church has a right to deal with them; and if they persist, to excommunicate them.—When they had their children baptised, they promised to perform this gospel duty towards them—if they fail to perform, the church has a right to deal with them as completely, as they have for the breach of the sabbath; or for drunkenness. Parents are vested with all the power, which is necessary for the performance of their duty. They may not only instruct, advise, and reprove; but they may chastise. "Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, and the rod is appointed to drive it away. And he that withholds the rod hates his child." If parents neglect to restrain, and correct those follies to which their children are naturally prone; or indulge and encourage them in those vices and vanities, which are incompatible with their christian obligations, they are justly censurable; as well as for the omission of those instructions, which are evidently implied in the Apostolic precept.

I HAVE now executed what I proposed, and have done it in that way which appeared most clear, and convincing to myself; but how it shall appear to others, I am wholly incapable to determine. I have endeavoured to be concise, and I may have become obscure. A sentiment is commonly clear to an author's own mind, independent of words; but when he endeavours to convey it to others, for their information, through the medium of words, they only can be proper judges of the success of his attempt.

IT has been my design, through the whole, to assist the serious and impartial enquirer after truth, to understand, what the scriptures teach respecting that one faith, one baptism, and one Lord Jesus Christ, which are the foundation of his hope, and the source of his comfort. And where my reader shall happen to be such, he will read with attention, and review with care—he will endeavor, free from the pride of party, or the warping influence of prepossession, to take up the arguments in their connection, force, and application; and if he does so, I trust my labour will not be altogether in vain.

FINIS.